

PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY
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PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY: GALVESTON, TEXAS
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

NARR: IT IS WELL ESTABLISHED IN AMERICAN FOLKLORE THAT EVERYTHING
IN THE STATE OF TEXAS IS BIG -- THE CATTLE, THE PEOPLE,
THE RANCHES, THE SKY. BUT ONE OF THE MOST PLEASANT PARTS
OF TEXAS IS RELATIVELY SMALL. THE CITY OF GALVESTON...
ITS SIZE CONTROLLED BY ITS ISLAND SHORELINES...ITS
WEATHER WARM...ITS HISTORY UNIQUE.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- BRINK

"GALVESTON IS AN ISLAND IN THE GULF OF MEXICO SOUTHEAST
OF HOUSTON."

NARR: THE DIRECTOR OF THE GALVESTON HISTORICAL FOUNDATION, PETER
BRINK.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- BRINK

"IT LIES JUST OFF THE MAINLAND, BUT THE FACT THAT IT HAS
A CAUSEWAY AND IS ISOLATED PHYSICALLY HAS ALLOWED IT TO
HAVE A RATHER SEPARATE HISTORY FROM THE REST OF THE STATE.
THE HISTORY GOES BACK, STARTING WITH THE KARANKAWA INDIANS,
NEARLY 22,000 YEARS AGO...THEN, IN THE 1500'S, CABEZA DE
VACA WAS SHIPWRECKED HERE AND SPENT SOME TIME ON THE
ISLAND. IN THE 1800'S THE GREAT PIRATE JEAN LAFITTE WAS
KICKED OUT OF NEW ORLEANS (IN THE NEARBY STATE OF LOUISIANA)
AND CAME OVER TO GALVESTON, (BUT) AFTER SEVERAL YEARS WAS
DRIVEN OUT BY THE UNITED STATES AFTER HE ATTACKED THEIR
SHIPS.

"BUT THE REAL STORY OF PRESENT-DAY GALVESTON STARTS IN THE
1930'S WHEN ENTREPRENEURS RECEIVED A GRANT FOR LAND. THEY
LAID OUT THE CITY (THE WAY WE SEE IT TODAY) BECAUSE OF THE
NATURAL DEEP-WATER PORT THAT IS AT ONE END OF THE ISLAND,
TO SERVICE THE BOOMING COTTON TRADE IN THE STATE OF TEXAS
AND THE SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES. COTTON REALLY FORMED
THE FINANCIAL BACKBONE OF THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY THEN, AND
ALMOST ALL OF THE COTTON, IN THE 1850'S THROUGH 1900, WAS
SHIPPED OUT THROUGH THE PORT OF GALVESTON."

PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY: GALVESTON, TEXAS

NARR: THROUGH THE LAST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY, COTTON WAS THE FINANCIAL BACKBONE OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH -- AND GALVESTON WAS THE FINANCIAL CENTER OF ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTHWEST. (SNEAK MUSIC HERE) IT WAS A PROSPEROUS TIME, A PERIOD OF RAPID GROWTH IN A PART OF THE COUNTRY STILL NOT YET FULLY SETTLED. FORTUNES WERE WON AND LOST...SOME REPUTATIONS MADE, AND OTHER RUINED...WHILE THE PORT CITY OF GALVESTON, TEXAS, WAS BEING ESTABLISHED AS A FAST-GROWING CENTER FOR COMMERCE AND TRADE, A HUB OF ACTIVITY WHERE MERCHANTS AND SETTLERS COMBINED THEIR STRENGTH TO PUSH BACK THE FRONTIER.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- NICKELODEON MUSIC -- UP FULL, THEN UNDER AND SLOWLY OUT

NARR: WHO WERE THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO GALVESTON IN THE LAST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY...WHO MADE THIS ISLAND CITY THE COMMERCIAL CENTER OF THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST? THEY WERE, ACCORDING TO TOWN RECORDS AND THE MEMORIES OF ITS OLDEST FAMILIES, IMMIGRANTS -- NEW ARRIVALS TO TEXAS AND TO THE UNITED STATES -- WHO CAME FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD. MUCH OF THE CITY'S POPULATION TODAY IS MADE UP OF DESCENDANTS OF THOSE IMMIGRANTS -- DESCENDANTS LIKE "BABE" SCHWARTZ, A MEMBER OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE AND A LONG-TIME POLITICAL LEADER IN GALVESTON.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- SCHWARTZ

"MY FAMILY CAME FROM EUROPE, FROM POLAND AND RUSSIA, AND THEY EMIGRATED TO GALVESTON. GALVESTON WAS A PORT OF ENTRY, ALONG WITH NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, THE GALVESTON POPULATION (TODAY) IS A MAJORITY COMPOSED OF MINORITIES. THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY EXISTS AS A LARGE COMMUNITY, THE JEWISH COMMUNITY EXISTS AS A FAIRLY LARGE COMMUNITY. THE IRISH, THE GERMAN SETTLER -- THE BOHEMIAN COMMUNITY, THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN COMMUNITY HERE IN THE COASTAL AREA. SOME IMMIGRANTS FROM EUROPE REMAINED IN ONE PLACE, WHILE OTHERS MOVED INLAND TO DIFFERENT PLACES.

TAPE: (CONT'D)

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T "THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN (COMMUNITY) IN GALVESTON IS CONTINUOUSLY (GROWING):...IN OUR POPULATION I THINK WE ARE CLOSE TO TWENTY PERCENT MEXICAN-AMERICAN. OUR NEGRO, OR BLACK POPULATION, CAME BECAUSE TEXAS WAS A SLAVE STATE LIKE OTHER SOUTHERN STATES. A LARGE BLACK POPULATION WAS BROUGHT TO TEXAS, (AND SINCE THE CIVIL WAR THEY HAVE MADE MANY) CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS STATE. GALVESTON ISLAND NOW HAS, I THINK, A THIRTY PERCENT BLACK POPULATION, WHICH IS MUCH HIGHER THAN MANY OTHER COMMUNITIES IN THIS STATE.

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T "SO TEXAS HAS A RICH HERITAGE OF IMMIGRANTS, AND GALVESTON HAS EVERY ONE OF THOSE (IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS) REPRESENTED. WE ARE A MINORITY COMMUNITY, (BUT) THE REAL MINORITY IN THIS COMMUNITY IS THE MAJORITY ALL OVER THE REST OF THE UNITED STATES,...THE WHITE ANGLO-SAXON PROTESTANT COMMUNITY, (A MAJORITY ELSEWHERE, BUT A MINORITY HERE IN THE CITY OF GALVESTON.)"

NARR: WHILE THE DESCENDANTS OF IMMIGRANTS IN GALVESTON HAVE RETAINED A MEASURE OF THEIR ETHNIC IDENTITY, THEY HAVE ALSO MERGED WITH EACH OTHER TO FORM THE COSMOPOLITAN SOCIETY THAT MAKES UP THE POPULATION OF THE CITY TODAY. ONE OF THE CITY'S LEADING BUSINESSMEN IS HARRIS KEMPNER, WHOSE GRANDFATHER, A POLISH JEW, ARRIVED IN TEXAS IN THE LATE 1850'S.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- KEMPNER

"GALVESTON REPRESENTS VERY WELL THE AMERICAN AMALGAM. I MEAN, WE HAVE BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER, THEY HAVE COMMON INTERESTS, YET THEY PRESERVE A GREAT MANY OF THEIR ETHNIC PREFERENCES. BUT THEY ARE NOT A HARD CORE OF IRREDENTIST PEOPLE (CLINGING TO THEIR PAST CULTURAL AND NATIONAL TIES;) THEY ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS, AND THEY LIVE THE AMERICAN LIFE WITH THEIR OWN VARIATIONS, WHICH I THINK IS THE HEALTHIEST OF ALL WAYS TO DO IT."

NARR: BUT LET'S RETURN FOR A MOMENT TO THE GALVESTON OF THE LATE 19TH CENTURY. THE GROWTH OF ITS POPULATION THROUGH INCREASED IMMIGRATION, AND THE EXPANSION OF GALVESTON'S DEEP-WATER PORT FACILITIES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE STEADY INCREASE IN COMMERCE AND TRADE, COMBINED TO MAKE THE CITY A BOOM-TOWN, A CENTER OF PROSPERITY, BOTH IN FINANCE AND IN THE ARTS. BUT AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, ALL THAT WAS

NARR: CHANGED AS THE FORCES OF NATURE DEALT THE CITY A BLOW FROM
(CONT'D) WHICH IT NEVER RECOVERED.

AGAIN, HISTORIAN PETER BRINK,
WHO SETS THE SCENE FOR THE DISASTER THAT FOLLOWED.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- BRINK

O "WITH THE PORT GROWING, WHAT YOU REALLY HAD IN THE 19TH
CENTURY WERE BEAUTIFUL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, OFTEN WITH
IRON FRONTS...WHERE THE INSURANCE COMPANIES, THE
MERCHANTS, THE COTTON FACTORIES, THE BANKERS HAD THEIR
OFFICES. AND THE MONEY GENERATED FROM THAT ALLOWED
BEAUTIFUL OPERA HOUSES SUCH AS THE GRAND AND THE TREMONT
TO BE BUILT, MANSIONS ON BROADWAY AND VICTORIAN HOUSES ALL
OVER THE ISLAND.

P
T "THEN, THERE WAS THE GREAT DISASTER OF THE 1900 STORM, (IN
WHICH) OVER 6,000 PEOPLE LOST THEIR LIVES. IT TOOK
GALVESTON SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD A HUGE SEAWALL TO PROTECT
THE ISLAND FROM FURTHER STORMS, AND TO PHYSICALLY RAISE
THE LEVEL OF THE LAND AT SOME POINTS BY FOUR TO FIVE
METERS...BY PUMPING SILT FROM THE GULF OF MEXICO ONTO THE
ISLAND AND LETTING IT SLOWLY DRY OUT. SOMETIMES BUILDINGS
WERE ACTUALLY JACKED UP; OTHER TIMES, THE BUILDINGS WERE
HIGH ENOUGH THAT THE LAND WAS PUT IN AROUND THEM. SO,
GALVESTON CAME BACK WITH A GREAT DEAL OF COURAGE AFTER THAT
DISASTER, BUT VERY SOON AFTER THAT, (THE NEARBY CITY OF)
HOUSTON CONVINCED THE GOVERNMENT TO DREDGE A HUGE CHANNEL
UP THROUGH ONE OF THE BAYOUS SO THAT THEY COULD HAVE A
DEEP-WATER PORT. (FROM THAT POINT ON,) THE RAILROADS MADE
THEIR CONNECTIONS AT HOUSTON, AND GALVESTON WAS LARGELY
BYPASSED BY THE GROWING COMMERCIAL BUSINESS."

NARR: THE HURRICANE OF SEPTEMBER 8, 1900, KILLED ONE-SIXTH OF
GALVESTON'S POPULATION, AND DESTROYED ONE-THIRD OF THE
CITY'S BUILDINGS. BUT IT ALSO TEMPORARILY DESTROYED
GALVESTON'S PORT FACILITIES -- THE COMMERCIAL LIFE OF THE
CITY. THE PROSPERITY THAT ACCOMPANIED THE MANY SHIPS WHICH
HAD USED GALVESTON'S PORT OF ENTRY WAS DIVERTED BY THE
WATERS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO -- AND BY BUSINESSMEN IN
HOUSTON, WHO DUG A SHIP CHANNEL OF THEIR OWN. GALVESTON
REBUILT, AND PROTECTED ITSELF AGAINST FURTHER DISASTERS
WITH A NEW SEAWALL, BUT IT WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME -- IT
WOULD NEVER AGAIN EXPERIENCE THE FAST-PACED GROWTH IT
HAD ENJOYED AS A MARKETPLACE FOR THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST.

NARR: (CONT'D)

INSTEAD, AS THE YEARS PASSED, THE CITY BECAME A VACATION SPOT AND A TOURIST ATTRACTION -- AS WELL AS A PERFECT LOCATION FOR SEVERAL UNIVERSITIES INTERESTED IN THE STUDY OF THE SEA. ONE OF THE LARGEST MEDICAL COMPLEXES IN THE COUNTRY CAN NOW BE FOUND IN GALVESTON -- ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS FROM NEARBY HOUSTON, WHO ARE ANXIOUS TO GET AWAY FROM THE SMOG AND POLLUTION OF THEIR OWN RAPIDLY EXPANDING CITY.

0 TEXAS STATE SENATOR "BABE" SCHWARTZ IS ONE AMONG MANY WHO BELIEVE THAT THE STORM OF 1900, WHILE A TERRIBLE DISASTER, MAY ACTUALLY HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR GALVESTON TO KEEP FROM GROWING TOO FAST.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- SCHWARTZ

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T "AS A GALVESTONIAN WHO WAS BORN ON THE ISLAND, AND AS FIRST-GENERATION CITIZEN...I HAVE COME TO LOVE THE ISLAND FOR ALL THE THINGS THAT IT IS, AND I NEVER HAVE BELIEVED THAT THIS IS A PLACE THAT WOULD SUPPORT A STEEL MILL OR A REFINERY, OR ANY OTHER KIND OF INDUSTRIAL MIGHT. AND I LOVE IT, I LOVE IT FOR THE RECREATIONAL POTENTIAL THAT IT HAS. I LOVE IT FOR THE FRESH AIR AND THE BEACH AND THE FISHING...AND FOR THE BOATING THAT MANY PEOPLE GET TO ENJOY...I AM NOT SAYING SELFISHLY THAT I DON'T WANT INDUSTRY TO PROVIDE JOBS FOR OTHER PEOPLE, BUT I AM TRYING TO RECOGNIZE THE LIMITATION THAT WE HAVE IN BEING ABLE TO HAVE A COMPATIBLE LIFE STYLE, AND HAVE INDUSTRY ALSO."

NARR: NOW, AS IN THE DAYS OF ITS EARLIER GLORY, THE PORT OF GALVESTON PROVIDES MANY CITY RESIDENTS WITH A STEADY JOB.

TAPE: CUT EIGHT -- DEVROY

"THE PORT OF GALVESTON HAS BEEN AN OFFICIAL PORT OF ENTRY FOR MORE THAN 150 YEARS."

NARR: THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PORT FACILITIES IS CHARLES DEVROY.

TAPE: CUT NINE -- DEVOY

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"IN 1825, IT WAS CHARTERED BY THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO AS A PROVISIONAL PORT OF ENTRY IN WHAT WAS THEN MEXICAN TERRITORY SO IT HAS A LONG HISTORY AS A PORT OF ENTRY. DURING THE DAYS RIGHT AFTER THE CIVIL WAR IT WAS USED VERY HEAVILY TO BRING IN IMMIGRANTS TO BUILD THE WESTERN RAILROADS ACROSS THE GREAT PLAINS. SO, IT IS THE OLDEST PORT WEST OF NEW ORLEANS, AND IT WAS THE PRIMARY PORT IN TEXAS UNTIL THE HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL WAS BUILT IN THE (EARLY 1900'S). TODAY, THE PORT IS EXPERIENCING A RESURGENCE OF COMMERCE. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE ECONOMY OF GALVESTON. IN THE 1970 FIGURES IT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVER 60 PERCENT OF THE ECONOMY OF THIS CITY -- THE CITY IS RELATIVELY SMALL, 65,000 CITIZENS -- SO THERE ARE MORE THAN 30,000 PEOPLE ON THIS ISLAND WHO ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PORT'S ACTIVITIES."

NARR: WHILE THE PORT OF GALVESTON UNQUESTIONABLY PROVIDES THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION FOR THE CITY'S FUTURE, THERE ARE OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN PROGRESS -- TRENDS THAT HOLD OUT THE PROMISE OF RESTORING AT LEAST A PORTION OF GALVESTON'S 19TH CENTURY CHARM.

TAPE: CUT TEN -- CONSTRUCTION SOUNDS -- ESTABLISH, THEN FADE UNDER AND OUT AT WILL

NARR: WORKMEN WITH THEIR POWER TOOLS HAVE BEEN BUSY FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN DOWNTOWN GALVESTON -- TEARING AWAY THE ROTTED TIMBERS AND BROKEN PLASTER IN MANY OF THE CITY'S ABANDONED BUILDINGS. CONSTRUCTED IN THE 19TH CENTURY, A LARGE NUMBER OF THE DECAYING BUILDINGS HAVE CAST IRON FRONTS AND UNUSUAL ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS, AND HAVE BEEN DECLARED HISTORIC LANDMARKS. RECONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY IN MANY PARTS OF TOWN, BUT ESPECIALLY ALONG A STREET CALLED "THE STRAND" -- AN AVENUE ONCE ABANDONED, BUT NOW COMING BACK TO LIFE. ARTISTS -- PAINTERS, SCULPTORS, MUSICIANS -- WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO MOVE BACK INTO THE

NARR: STRAND SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AND THEY PROVIDED THE EARLY
(CONT'D)
STIMULUS TO RESTORE THE AREA TO AT LEAST A VISUAL
SEMBLANCE OF ITS ONE-TIME GLORY. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE LOCAL CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL IS EMILY WHITESIDE. SHE
LIVES IN ONE OF THE RESTORED BUILDINGS ALONG THE STRAND.

TAPE: CUT ELEVEN -- WHITESIDE

"MANY NEW APARTMENTS HAVE BEEN OPENED IN THE PAST TWO
YEASRS, ALONG WITH SHOPS, AND THERE IS A WHOLE (PROCESS OF)
REVITALIZATION HERE ON THE STRAND. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY,
WHAT HAS HAPPENED IS THAT WE HAVE SOLD ALL OF THE BUILDINGS
ON THE STRAND AND HAVE BEGUN TO LOOK FURTHER AND HAVE
DISCOVERED NEW TREASURES ONLY A BLOCK AWAY IN THE CORE OF
THE CITY, RIGHT DOWNTOWN -- ONE OF WHICH IS OUR MAGNIFICENT
1894 GRAND OPERA HOUSE WHICH, AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY,
PLAYED HOST TO MANY INTERNATIONAL STARS AND MANY NEW,
YOUNG AMERICAN ARTISTS. THIS IS UNDERGOING RESTORATION, AND
WHEN (IT IS) RESTORED, IT WILL BE A PERFECTLY ELEGANT 1,000
SEAT OPERA HOUSE WHICH WILL HAVE NOT ONLY OPERA, BUT THEATER,
AND DANCE, AND GUEST ARTISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ONCE
AGAIN."

NARR: THE ELEGANCE OF OPERA...THE STIMULUS OF THE ARTS...A DIVERSE
COMMUNITY, WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD...
GALVESTON, TEXAS -- AS GLEN CAMPBELL TOLD US SEVERAL
YEARS AGO -- IS A CITY TO SING ABOUT...

TAPE: CUT TWELVE -- MUSIC -- GLENN CAMPBELL SINGING "GALVESTON" --
SNEAK UNDER NARRATOR, UP FULL AT :08 -- FADE UNDER NARRATOR
AT :35 AND HOLD BRIEFLY, THEN OUT AT WILL -- TOTAL 1:10

NARR: GALVESTON MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE...
A PORT OF ENTRY FOR SOME...A PLACE OF BUSINESS FOR MANY...
A VACATION SPOT FOR OTHERS. FOR HARRIS KEMPNER, JUNIOR --
WHOSE FAMILY TIES GO BACK 120 YEARS -- GALVESTON IS A HOME
WITH AN EXCITING PAST, AND A PROMISING FUTURE.

TAPE: CUT THIRTEEN -- KEMPNER

"IT'S AN INTERESTING AMALGAM OF TYPES OF THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING. ON ONE SIDE OF THIS SAND SPIT (ISLAND) IS A LONG BEACH; THE OTHER SIDE IS A MAJOR PORT. AT ONE END OF THE ISLAND THERE IS A MEDICAL COMPLEX WHICH EMPLOYS MORE THAN FIVE THOUSAND PEOPLE. AND YET, WE SEEM TO BE ABLE TO LIVE A LIFE WHICH HAS SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RELAXATION WHICH MAY HAVE CHARACTERIZED THE SOUTH IN THE PRE-CIVIL WAR PERIOD. BUT IN MY OPINION (OUR CITY'S LIFE) IS FAR MORE CHARACTERISTIC OF A TOWN LIKE NEW ORLEANS (LOUISIANA) WHERE THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL CULTURAL MIX AND A WILLINGNESS TO TOLERATE DIFFERENCES AMONG PEOPLES AND IDEAS AND CONCEPTS. WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO PRESERVE (THAT QUALITY) IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY IS SOMETHING THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT THERE ARE AN AWFUL LOT OF US WHO ARE TRYING VERY HARD TO MAINTAIN CERTAIN ASPECTS OF IT."

ANNCR: YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO A SPECIAL BROADCAST ON THE
VOICE OF AMERICA -- A PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY:
GALVESTON, TEXAS. THIS PROGRAM WAS WRITTEN BY JOHN LENNON.
YOUR NARRATOR WAS-----.

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